THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

February/March 2012 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Wielding Power

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Wielding power is tricky. When famine struck Ireland in 1782-1783, the English government used its power to close the Irish ports to keep local food in Ireland, a policy which caused food prices to drop immediately. Merchants protested the port closures, but the government held firm. During the Great Famine of 1845-1852, however, the government did not act, the ports were left open, and huge quantities of food were exported from Ireland to England while the people of Ireland were dying of starvation. Not until almost a million died was any government relief organized, and it took the form of corn meal so coarse that it often killed the constitutionally-weakened Irish who ate it. The government's failure to save the impoverished Irish people is not surprising. Parliament's primary constituency was the business class, which emerged from the famine wealthier in cash and property.

Rita Corbin, 1954

The conviction that governments serve elites rather than the general populace is widespread. In *The Boston Globe*, December, 21, 2011, Brandeis Professor Kanan Makiya said that Iraq is now run by corrupt "political elites.... no better than the former Baathist elite that was overthrown." Also on December 21st, the Associated Press reported that 10,000 Egyptian women demonstrated against the brutality of the caretaker military government which demonstrators empowered only months earlier after Hosni Mubarak was overthrown. That same day, the BBC broadcast a story of Chinese villagers barricading their streets against local officials who've been seizing their land. According to the BBC, "Every year, tens of thousands of demonstrations occur [in China] against corrupt officials."

Giving anyone power over a nation is risky. When the Israelites asked for a king, the prophet Samuel warned them: "**...the king who is to reign over you.... will take your sons and assign them to his chariotry and cavalry, and they will run in front of his chariot.... He will make them plow his plowland and harvest his harvest and make his weapons of war.... He will also take your daughters as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. He will take the best of your fields, of your vineyards, and olive groves and give them to his officials. He will tithe your crops... and you yourselves will become his slaves"** (I Samuel 10-18).

This is not to say that all politicians are corrupt. Some use their authority for the general good, but power tends toward personal aggrandizement and favoritism. The authors of the US Constitution were so wary of tyranny that they tried to craft a government with three branches checking each other's power. Little did the founding fathers realize that all the branches would eventually serve the same master—the rich. From a nation originally lauded

(Continued on Page 2)

Rita Corbin

1930-2011

Editor's Note: Rita Corbin died on November 17th at 81. She was an extraordinary artist, loving mother, grandmother, and dear friend to many, including the co-founder of The Catholic Worker, Dorothy Day. We were blessed to know her. Many a time, Rita drew graphics to order for The Catholic Radical*, often on terribly short notice. We are sorry for her passing, but grateful for the gift of her life and work. We are proud to reprint some of her art along with the following interview by Kristina Kintz, from* The Catholic Radical, *June/July 1992.*

I got a call this morning from Scott Schaeffer-Duffy. Today was the day I would finally interview Rita Corbin. Although I knew very little about her or her work, I was excited by the idea of meeting what sounded like a very dedicated artist. We drove up to her home on Austin Street in Worcester. She lives in a house with artist-activists Tom and Andrea Borbely-Lewis, across the street from the Mustard Seed Catholic Worker soup kitchen. Scott rapped on her window and she let us in. Her bedroom/studio is very small, filled with drawings, art and religious books, supplies, some clothing, and a bed. After she finished making her bed, we sat down on it and began the interview.

When did you first decide you wanted to pursue art?

In 1947, I was at Cathedral Girls High School in New York. The school was keen on turning out secretaries. But I refused to learn how to type. I thought, I'm not going to go through high school and become a secretary. The heck with that! I knew I didn't want to go into business,

(Continued on Page 4)

Power

(Continued from Page 1)

as a land of equal opportunity and broad prosperity, America has become a country where 50% of its population is either poor or low income, while the top 1% own 38.1% of the wealth. (This wealth gap is even greater if one includes the tens of millions of undocumented people working in the US.) Although the wealthy, white, male, slave-owners who established our republic proclaimed government "of, by, and for the people," it wasn't until a hundred years later that public education was provided and fifty years after that before fair wages, reasonable hours, and safe working conditions were mandated. Civil rights took another quarter century. Environmental protection is still a work in progress.

But since the election of President Ronald Reagan, the government has increasingly reduced services while transferring wealth to the rich. People think nothing now of paying fees to use public parks or to have their children participate in school sports. Fire departments, the postal service, public transportation, libraries, and schools go begging, while the lords of Wall Street and the mandarins of the military industrial complex gorge themselves at the people's expense. And yet, ironically, many impoverished Americans still cheer for super-wealthy politicians, like Mitt Romney, whose economic policies would make his class even richer.

Then again, the corrupting influence of power is not confined to politics. When Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield opened their ice cream business in Vermont, they famously pledged that no executive would ever earn more than seven times the salary of their lowest paid employee. The CEO now earns $250,000, quite a bit more than the average Joe.

Similarly, while Pope John XXIII encouraged Catholic decision-making via consultation with bishops, lay people, and other faiths, subsequent popes have moved ever closer to top down rule and papal infallibility. Interestingly, one of the most prestigious theologians of our time, Rev. Hans Küng, made an impassioned appeal in June 2011 for decentralization of Church power. In an open letter, Father Küng points out blunders of Pope Benedict XVI, the most autocratic pope since Pius XII, and argues that frequently held councils of bishops are less prone to error or abuse. Küng rejects authoritarianism saying, "unconditional obedience can never be paid to any human authority; it is due to God alone."

But shouldn't we go even deeper than pointing our fingers at political, business, and religious leaders who abuse power? After all, don't all of us wield some authority over others? Police officers, teachers, parents, owners of pets, and yes, even Catholic Workers can wield power abusively. Here at Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker, a core group of volunteers manages donations, determines the rules, makes the menus, and has the final word on how long a guest can remain. We too can lord it over others and save the best portions for ourselves. We might not even notice our elitism. At Saint Benedict's Catholic Worker in Washington, DC, volunteers would sleep on the floor if all our beds were full because Christ urged us "**to take the lowest place**," as He certainly did. When we first came to Worcester, members of our community would go out in pairs to spend one night a month on the street to remind us of how difficult homelessness is and of the fact that the Son of God had "**nowhere to lay His head.**" Like governments, which Thomas Jefferson suggested should be overthrown periodically, power arrangements on the interpersonal level need to be evaluated and reformed constantly.

Brian Kavanagh

I'm happy to say that Ben and Jerry announced in late 2011 that their company will become 100% fair trade. They will give up some of their profits to redistribute wealth and power downward. It doesn't happen often and isn't easy, but power can take the form of servitude. We can grow in moral stature and personal happiness by divesting power and sharing decision-making. The Occupy Wall Street people take it on the chin from critics who demand immediate results, but they model a better world by eschewing leaders and embracing consensus. Ultimately, the most vital state, congregation, or business is community-based with loyalty voluntarily given and power dispersed as widely as possible and oriented toward service of others.

Once again, Jesus sets the standard, "**Though He was in the form of God, He did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather He emptied himself and took the form of a slave**..." Philippians 2:6-7a. Ω

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CATHOLIC RADICAL

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Founded in 1933, The Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

The Monks of Tibhirine

reviewed by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

The Monks of Tibhirine, by John W. Kiser, 2002, Saint Martin's Griffin, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY, 10010.

American John Kiser is not the first writer to record the story of the seven French monks who in March 1996 were kidnapped from an isolated Trappist monastery in Algeria and later killed. The event which captured the attention of France in the spring of 1996 generated several books. But Kiser's telling, with its investigative, even contemplative, attention to the political and religious context of the monks' deaths, renders a polarizing act of human cruelty into a relevant and valuable tale of transcendent love.

Algeria in the mid-nineties is a microcosm for the many conflicts troubling the Muslim world. More than a century of French colonial rule has stunted the development of democracy. The country's independence in 1962, after an eight year war with France, brings political instability and corruption. Declining oil prices in the mid-eighties reduces the government's ability to provide social programs, contributing to high unemployment, food shortages, and student revolts.

From among the disaffected, arise the Islamists who attribute the malaise in Algeria and throughout Arab states to Muslims' departure from their faith. Their message resonates and the Islamists win the majority in the country's first free elections. In a pattern that resembles the fate of Hamas in Palestine, these elections are nullified because of the Islamist victory. Denied access to the political process, the *mujahdeen* pick up arms. Foreigners are ordered to leave. Nuns and priests, many of whom have given decades of their lives to Algeria, are slain, but so too, and in far greater number, are the Muslim clerics, intellectuals, and journalists who publicly condemn the killing of civilians. By 1996, the country's hellish civil war has taken the lives of 60,000 to 100,000 Algerians.

For all its turbulence, Algeria, in the eyes of Frenchman Christian de Cherge, is a country inclined toward the divine, a place where religion is not disassociated from everyday life. A Muslim friend named Mohammed saves Christian's life while he is serving as an officer during the Algerian war for independence. When armed rebels come upon the two men who are out walking, Mohammed steps between the young officer and the rifles aim at his chest. For this act of intervention on behalf of "the enemy," Mohammed, a father of ten, is found dead the next day with his throat slit.

Mohammed's sacrifice influences

Christian's decision to join the Trappists and return to Algeria where he is elected prior of a small, isolated monastery located outside the mountainous village of Tibhirine. The nine men who form the monastic community are of differing dispositions and backgrounds. One is a former communist, another a paratrooper turned plumber. None share the desire of Christian, an intellectual from an aristocratic family, to "live in spiritual communion with Islam," writes Kiser. But all are committed to the charism of Christian presence and solidarity with their Muslim neighbors, and the monastery is a place of deep friendship. During times of peace, the monks host inter-faith dialogue. During times of war, they tend to the wounded terrorists who show up at the dispensary door. Throughout much of Algeria's civil war, Tibhirine remains untouched by violence, a sparing many attribute to the "monastic effect."

Kiser describes The Monks of Tibhirine as a love story wrapped in a tale of horror. He does not understate the horror nor ignore its causes. Yet ultimately, this is a story of great love practiced amid the terror and divisions of war. Many in the West regard Islam as an intrinsically violent religion forever at odds with Christianity. Kiser's thoughtfully told account does not support this erroneous view and instead presents a differentiated understanding of Islam and a profound example of Christian witness. Profiled here are Christians and Muslims who understand God as the great unifier.

The monks "were not martyrs to their faith," Kiser writes. "They did not die because they were Christians. They died because they wouldn't leave their Muslim friends, who depended on them and who lived in equal danger." Yet isn't this what it means to be a Christian in the very deepest sense, to love God by loving neighbor? Such a Christianity is understood by people everywhere. News of the murder of the monks brought condemnations from Muslim leaders from throughout the Middle East, who called the act "inhuman" and against the teachings of Islam. Across France, 40,000 churches tolled their bells in mourning and 10,000 people rallied in Paris to honor the men. But it was the responses of ordinary Muslims in Algeria that were the most moving. Thousands sent letters expressing their condolences and shame to Algeria's Catholic bishops. "No matter what has happened, we truly love you," read one. "You are part of us. We have failed in our duty to protect you, to love you enough. Forgive us. Your place is with us. Don't listen to the Pharisees. You must accomplish your divine mission with us. I believe it is God's plan."

I am so grateful for this story about the monks of Tibhirine. Reading it reminded me that a courageous faith in Christ as Unconditional Lover is not naïve or futile, but a potent source of hope for many. Ω

Rita Corbin

(Continued from Page 1)

pure instinct I guess. I needed a major and art appealed to me the most.

Did you have any non-formal art education?

I spent my afternoons in galleries. I spent a lot of time walking around New York City, gallery to gallery, museum to museum, park to park. A lot of my education was just being in the city, moving around and observing. Years later, I took brief courses at Art Students League NYC and with Hans Hoffman.

1985

After high school, did you continue your art education?

The art teacher at high school found a scholarship for me at the Franklin School of Professional Art, a three-year advertising school.

What did you concentrate in at art school?

I did mostly life drawing. We had two good teachers, the life drawing teacher and a teacher who took students all over the city to draw from the city. That was what I was doing anyways. I knew I wasn't interested in advertising. The commercial art teachers were so cynical. They told their students that it didn't really matter if they liked what they were drawing because they had to do it to make money.

1991

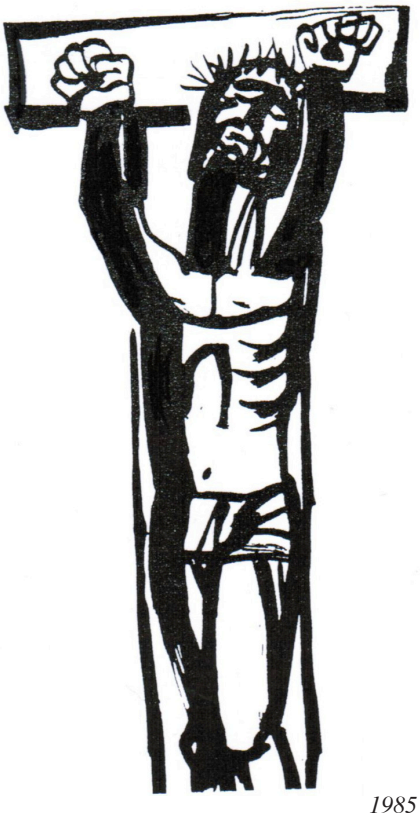
When did you first get involved with the Catholic Worker and what was the extent of your involvement?

While I was still in art school, a friend told me about this place downtown that had a newspaper and fed the hungry. I was really interested, but she didn't want to go and suggested I go alone, which I did on New Year's Day 1950. I think one of the very first people I met was Dorothy Day. I started going to the Friday meetings[round table discussions for clarification of thought]. Dorothy requested some of my artwork for the Catholic Worker paper. She also sent me to *Commonweal* magazine, and I began doing artwork for them as well. I got to be good friends with the people at the Catholic Worker. We would go out on picket lines, demonstrate against civil defense [nuclear war preparation drills], support strikes, and go on retreats together. I worked at the soup lines and baked bread. At Christmas, we sang hymns in front of the Women's House of Detention. The Catholic Worker was my school, my education.

Steve Biko, 1988

What did you do after art school?

When I left art school, they told me I was a good artist and should go to work at an advertising agency. I was offered a job at one, but I refused. Around this time, I married my husband, whom I met at the Catholic Worker. At one of the Friday meetings we heard Dave Dillinger speak about his trip to Moscow distributing leaflets about peace. He was planning to publish a radical magazine and needed editors and illustrators. My husband and I were interested, so we joined his community in New Jersey and spent the next ten years working on the *Liberation* magazine.



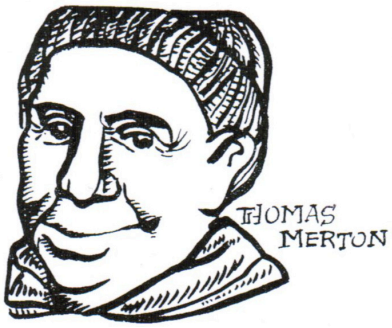
1985

Where did you go after New Jersey?

Dorothy Day said she needed some people to edit and illustrate the Catholic Worker newspaper. So my husband and I move to the Catholic Worker farm at Tivoli, New York. The idea of the farm was to have conferences and peace-maker retreats. We had a lot of summer visitors, over a

Coalminer, Virginia, 1982

hundred sometimes. It was a house of hospitality on the land. A great deal of gardening went on. In 1968 and 1970 our last two children were born. There were major breakdowns in the drafty main house where we were living. The electricity would go off during storms and the septic system was a constant problem. After ten years on the farm, our family moved to Canada, where my husband got a job as an English professor. I did occasional freelance artwork when I found the time. I donated most of my work, but occasionally I received payment. In retrospect, maybe I shouldn't have given so much away to people who could have paid for it. It's not fair to other artists for me to work entirely for free. Four years later, my husband and I separated. The children and I moved back to the States, first to Poughkeepsie, New York and later to Weston, Vermont. Right down the road from me, I discovered Patty and Bill Coleman, who published educational newsletters and publications for parishes. Once a week, I would do illustrations for their bulletins. Eventually, I became art director for Growth Associates Publishers. Two years ago, I moved here to Worcester.



1990

What artwork do you consider your best?

Drawings of the poor and dispossessed, those on the fringes of society, the same kinds of people Christ came among to heal and teach. They are still here, all around us today. Drawings from nature, trees, birds, plants, etc. All life is sacred.

What art is most difficult?

All the work of the artist is a real struggle to bring some kind of form and feeling out of the materials one uses and the society one lives in.

1992

How do you think art, politics, and religion relate?

Almost everything we do or often don't do has political consequences. The artist's responsibility to society is to be an artist developing talents to the best of one's ability.

Do you believe the artist has a social responsibility?

Everyone has a social responsibility.

Do you regret rejecting a lucrative career in commercial art?

What I do is kind of commercial, but I have control over it. I can choose what I want to do. I consider myself an artist-illustrator, not a fine artist, not a commercial artist.

Do you have a message to young artists?

Keep working at it. It doesn't come easy. It's very fulfilling. A lot of young people think in terms of jobs and not vocations. It's rather schizophrenic. Work is one thing and hobbies and home life are a totally separate thing. Nothing is being integrated. Ω

A blind man, 1992

The Truth about Guantánamo

Editor's Note: During a House hearing last summer, Catholic Worker Carmen Trotta and 13 other peace activists non-violently spoke out against passage of the National Defense Authorization Act. The bill, passed December 31, 2011, requires the use of military detention and military courts for suspected terrorists, American or foreign, and makes it virtually impossible to close Guantánamo. In early January, a Washington, DC jury found Carmen guilty of disrupting an orderly session of Congress. The following is a shortened version of his sentencing statement.

Shaker Aamer is a prisoner at Guantánamo. He has been held there without charge or trial for every one of that peculiar institution's ten years. A British resident, Aamer has a ten-year-old boy he has never met. He is at death's door as we speak. If we do not decry his current condition, we may be complicit in his murder.

Like the vast majority of the 779 prisoners that have passed through or remain at Guantánamo, Mr. Aamer is guilty of nothing but being in the wrong place at the wrong time and being Muslim.

Recall the delayed release of the photographs from Abu Ghraib in 2004. The My Lai of a different generation, these images seared our consciences. We do well to remember that a second set of photos has never been released. They are kept from the American people, a national security secret, because they are deemed too dismaying to look upon. Surely we know less that half of what has gone on at Guantánamo.

Subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and torture, Shaker Aamer organized a hunger strike at Guantánamo in 2005. After weeks of fasting, Mr. Aamer, a charismatic leader and an English speaker, was able to negotiate an end to the fast, having gained certain concessions from the base. Just a few weeks later, the concessions were withdrawn and Mr. Aamer went back on strike.

I should mention that it was this first hunger strike — a call for mercy by a beleaguered group of Muslim men to what they consider the Christian world, which offered almost no response —that led me and twenty-four friends to travel to Cuba in December 2005 to, as Jesus taught, try to visit the prisoners.

In 2006, we have good reason to believe, Mr. Aamer was subjected to a torture session with three other prisoners: Yasser al Zahrani, Mani al Utaybi and Ali Abdullah Ahmed. Those last three prisoners (all cleared for release at the time) all died during the torture session.

According to the military version of these events, the three prisoners, highly trained al Qaeda operatives, had committed simultaneous suicide, as a "publicity stunt," an act of "asymmetrical warfare"

against the American people. Informed voices — lawyers, ex-Guantánamo prisoners and investigative journalists — believe that Shaker Aamer is being held at Guantánamo to suppress his knowledge of these events.

We call for his immediate release....

I lament that a jury of American citizens would not immediately nullify a case against nonviolent protesters, protesting the existence of the interrogation center at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. I am not, however, surprised.... The media coverage of Guantánamo, with rare exception, has been atrocious. The American people were told incessantly that the prisoners at Guantánamo represented the "worst of the worst"! One military commander, when asked why the prisoners were cuffed, shackled, strapped, hooded and put in ear muffs when transported, responded that "these men are so dangerous that they would gnaw through the hydraulic lines of a C-137 aircraft to bring it down, just to kill Americans." It is this absurd mentality... that prevails because it is not subject to ... any critique at all in the media.

And thus the general public is dumbed down and the hysterical politics of the present proceed apace. These are the politics of the very Congress we attempted to petition. It was attempting to pass legislation that would make it nearly impossible to transfer the prisoners presently in Guantánamo anywhere, including to courts in the United States, where they could be tried. Because, ostensibly, these highly-trained al Qaeda operatives are super human in their powers and would be a threat to the American populace. Again, the real threat to be American people is the narcotic, hypnotic power of the Big Lie....

The antidote to the Big Lie, to propaganda... is the truth and the search thereof, in our case, by an impartial judge and jury. The judge is trained in the law as an ever-evolving development of human civilization....

This court could have served as a vital democratic forum, robustly fulfilling its role in the balance of powers, if it had allowed itself to explore the question that the defendants tried to put to it. To wit: is it possible that a variety of circumstances could be such as to allow that speaking out a critique of proposed legislation in the House gallery might be recognized as a valid form of petitioning our government for redress of grievances?

Unfortunately... you have ruled the question out in advance in conformity to the strictures of an atrophied professional culture. Decent judges seem to blanche at the term "judicial activism" and leave the field of play open to radical statist reactionaries like those who have gutted *habeas corpus* of all meaning.... If the courts were healthy, George Bush's ploy to create an offshore interrogation center where prisoners could be tortured and experimented on beyond the reach of the Constitution would have been laughed away as an adolescent prank. Instead, as it stands, it may be deemed a political masterstroke.

...Guantánamo remains a metastasizing cancer. I beg you to consider in depth the National Defense Authorization Act of 2012. Guantánamo has come home and we hope you'll fight it....I lament that an American judge would not immediately nullify any sentence against nonviolent protesters, protesting Guantánamo. And while I am not surprised, I remain hopeful. Ω

Letters

To the Editors,
Every week we pray prayers of the faithful that the "men and women in the armed services, who are fighting for our freedom, come home safely." I spoke to our priest about the phrase, "fighting for freedom," to which I object and asked if "serving our country" could be substituted. I told him that the ope had condemned the war in Iraq. He refused and said I was thinking "too narrowly" and mentioned the Korean War!

It is very frustrating not to be able to make any inroads into the position of our Church in regard to war.

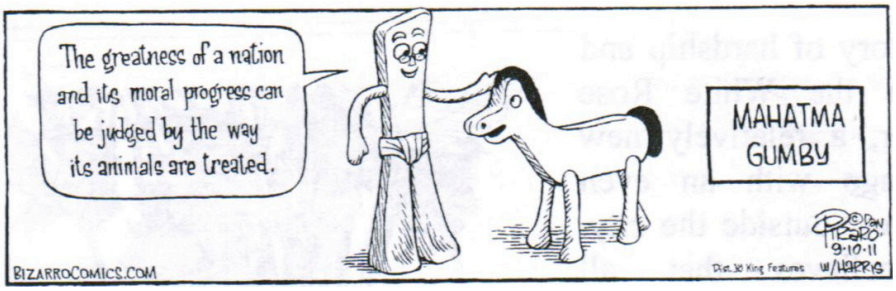
The Catholic Church in America is deathly afraid of appearing unpatriotic (or un-American).

Donna Witzleben
Swarthmore, Pennsylvania

Editor's Note: Father Emmanuel Charles McCarthy, a Catholic theologian, argues that the Just War Theory is a pagan construct completely contrary to Christianity. So long as it remains part of Catholic teaching, Catholics will use it to justify the wars of their native states. Thankfully, the Gospel is still proclaimed at Mass where Catholics can be moved by the simple truth of Christ's nonviolence. Of course, the ideal scenario would be to have the Gospel read and amplified by the homilist rather than bent toward nationalism. We pray for more clergy, like Father McCarthy, to preach unadulterated Christian nonviolence.

Brian Kavanagh

Catholic Worker Calendar


The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.
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February 6 & 20 & March 5 & 19 — Mass: Please join us in eucharistic prayer and song. 7:30 P.M., Refreshments to follow.

February 8 — Compassion & Ethical Eating: Mike Benedetti gives reasons for not eating meat or animal products. 7:00 P.M., Vegan refreshments to follow.

February 15 —Closing Guantánamo: Claire Schaeffer-Duffy talks on the courageous, faith-based campaign to close the US military prison and to end torture and indefinite detention. 7:00 P.M., Refreshments to follow.

March 7—Praying with the Mystics: Catholic Worker and theology professor, Michael Boover reflects on the rich wisdom of Bernard of Clairvaux, Julian of Norwich, and other mystics. 7:00 P.M., Refreshments to follow.

For More Information: Call 508 753-3588

Dear Scott, Claire, family, community members, friends, and guests,
Thanks for the latest *Catholic Radical*. Dorothy Day's article, "A Baby is Born," brought a tear to my eye—both because of its portrayal of the sacredness of life, but also because it gives a sense of the courage it takes for women to have a baby on their own.

The young women in this area have recently begun a women's sharing night each week. This week's discussion was abortion. There were a fair few women present who are single mums or at least used to be, so they gave the real human side to the struggles young women face when they choose to have their baby alone.

I liked Ken's article, "Where Do You Stand?" Somehow through his words I picked up a sense of the humanness of the soldiers too. In speaking out against evil it can become easy to forget to love the perpetrators too. The article left me with a sense of love for all. Ken leaves for Afghanistan tomorrow [December 10, 2011]. I hope it goes well for him.

The increasing level of homelessness in Worcester is a bit of a worry—especially as the temperature drops. On cold winter nights here, when I'm rugged up indoors, I often feel for those who are caught without shelter.

Claire, I like how you concluded the Mason Street Musings, about flinging gold about to those who ask and how that makes us rich....

Sheri Ellery
New Zealand

Editor's Note: Ken returned safely from Afghanistan with a deeper appreciation for the Afghan people and the need for an end to the US-led war. To schedule a presentation: contact Ken Hannaford-Ricardi at keninafghanistan@gmail.com.

Mason Street Musings

Earlier this week, I received a call from someone who asked to join us for dinner because he and his friend hadn't eaten in two days. When they arrived, I learned that they were homeless men who had been part of the Occupy Boston encampment until the police closed it. Apparently, the more affluent occupiers had taken pains to see that everyone had somewhere to go. These men were offered free housing in Worcester in exchange for some maintenance work. At dinner, I found them to be polite and articulate individuals for whom the Occupy movement provided purpose, community, and housing.

Coincidentally, last night I received a phone call from Occupy Wall Street asking if we could provide shelter for six occupiers who had spent the previous night sleeping outside in Worcester. The temperature had dropped to eight degrees and one of the group had serious frostbite. In a sign of the times, the caller from the Big Apple was simultaneously communicating with the stranded occupiers by computer while he talked to me on the phone. As luck would have it, we had four empty beds (a real rarity) so Claire drove down to the train station to pick them up. Only three ended up needing hospitality, but again we were impressed with their manners and intelligence. The two men and one woman were very young, only 18 or thereabouts. The woman was a Canadian who had been with Occupy Wall Street from day one. The stories of the two men were more tragic, marked by a lack of family and other support. Our son Patrick fed them and told me afterwards how glad he was that we had welcomed them. Patrick, a student at Harvard, had mixed feelings about the Occupy movement, but was moved by these young people's effusive gratitude for the dinner and warm bed.

Meg Crocker Birmingham

In the morning, after I washed their clothes, got them breakfast, and offered to buy bus tickets to their next stops, the 18-year-old from North Carolina, beamed, "I don't know if you are the hugging type, Mr. Scott, but I'm going to give you one anyway. You folks have been kinder to me than anyone in my *entire* life!" Can you imagine how hard his life must have been that one day of shelter and a bus ticket constituted the most lavish gifts he'd known? Doesn't everyone deserve to be treated like a king or queen multiple times in their lives?

The young woman told me that they had one sleeping bag between the three of them the night before. They could have frozen to death. Cynics have dismissed the Occupy movement as a bunch of spoiled college students whining about privation that they don't really experience. Truth be told, most peace activists I've known do come from affluent backgrounds, but the Occupy movement seems to be genuinely diverse. When one considers how decisions were being made by consensus, it really does model the meetings of workers and scholars that the Catholic Worker's co-founder, Peter Maurin, always called for during the Great Depression. In fact, now that so many cities have broken up the Occupy camps, the former members are on the road like millions of jobless during the 1930s. My mother-in-law says it was not uncommon during the Depression for down-on-their-luck men to come to the back door of her home seeking food. My grandfather, a World War I vet, spent years riding the rails before finding work and raising a family. Even then, he contemplated breaking into an A&P market for food, a crime he was saved from committing by the unexpected arrival of a long-promised veterans' bonus.

Our job, our privilege really, is to provide those crushed by capitalism a sense of hope, purpose, and community. They need to be treated as angels in disguise. Thank you all for helping us do just that. Ω

Scott

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